

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07

IO-10 L-02 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-03 PRS-01

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5531

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL, SOVIET PRESS ON MBFR

REF: MOSCOW 4246

1. SUMMARY. THE BRITISH EMBASSY HERE HAS BRIFED US ON A DISCUSSION ON MBFR BETWEEN THEIR AMBASSADOR (GARVEY) AND THE CHEIF OF THE MFA DIVISION RESPONSIBLE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS, ISRAELYAN, ON APRIL 15. THE CONVERSATION REVEALED NOTHING STARTLING OR NEW, BUT INDICATED THAT THE SOVIETS ARE AT LEAST AT PRESENT CONTENT TO STAY FAIRLY CLOSE TO THEIR CURRENT POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IN EXPECTATION THAT THE WEST WILL BE MAKING NEW PROPOSALS. SOVIET MEDIA SEEM TO BE GIVING MBFR A SLIGHTLY BETTER PRESS OF LATE, HIGHLIGHTING THE VIENNA TALKS AS A CONFIDENTIAL

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MAJOR THRUST OF THE PROCLAIMED SOVIET INTENT "TO STRENGTHEN

POLITICAL DETENTE THROUGH MILITARY DETENTE". END SUMMARY.

2. ISRAELYAN, IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH GARVEY, EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING FOR THE SLOW PACE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, REFERRING TO THEIR COMPLEXITY. HE SAID THE SOVIET SIDE IS NOT UPSET ABOUT IT. HE CHARACTERIZED THE ATMOSPHERE AS GOOD. HE CHIDED THE WEST FOR ITS LACK OF FLEXIBILITY. HE CONTENDED THAT THE EAST "WITHOUT CHANGING ITS BASIC POSITION, WHICH IT WOULD NEVER DO," HAD OFFERED SEVERAL DIFFERENT FORMULATIONS IN A SEARCH FOR AN AGREEMENT. HE CONTESTED GARVEY'S ASSERTION THAT THE SOVIET MEDIA PAY LESS ATTENTION TO MBFR THAN TO SALT, INSISTING THAT HE HIMSELF, AS WELL AS KRASULIN (BORIS KRASULIN, A COUNSELOR-LEVEL OFFICIAL IN ISRAELYAN'S DIVISION) HAVE WRITTEN ARTICLES FOR THE PRESS THOUGH THEY HAD NOT SIGNED THEM. HE REFERRED TO BREZHNEV'S DISCUSSION OF MBFR IN HIS SPEECH IN BUDAPEST, AND SAID THE LEADERSHIP SPEECHES ON APRIL 22 (LENIN'S BIRTHDAY) AND ON MAY 9 (END OF WWII) WOULD ALSO COVER MBFR.

3. ON ASSYMETRY, ISRAELYAN SAID THAT THE VIENNA TALKS HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE "EXISTING SITUATION," NOT WITH THEORETICAL FORCE LEVELS. DATA EXCHANGE IS NOT THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO AGREEMENT. THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THE DIFFERENCE IN APPROACH OF THE TWO SIDES. ISRAELYAN CONTINUED THAT THE WEST ITSELF HAD DETERMINED ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF FORCES. THE WEST'S OWN DECISIONS HAD CREATED THE REALITY WITH WHICH THE NEGOTIATIONS MUST DEAL. ISRAELYAN CONCLUDED THAT CUTS SHOULD BE BY EQUAL PERCENTAGE; IF THIS COULD NOT BE AGREED, THE "SAD ALTERNATIVE" WOULD BE FOR BOTH SIDES TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE PRESENT LEVEL OF FORCES. ISRAELYAN DISMISSED THE QUESTION OF DATA EXCHANGE BY INSISTING THAT THE SOVIETS "ARE NOT INTERESTED" IN WHAT FORCES THE WEST MAINTAINS.

4. COMMENT. ISRAELYAN'S REMARKS OFFER LITTLE IN THE WAY OF NEW INSIGHTS INTO SOVIET PLANS FOR THE SIXTH ROUND OF MBFR. IF HIS COMMENTS CAN BE CHARACTERIZED, IT IS THAT THEY DISPLAY THE SAME MINIMUM OF FLEXIBILITY FOUND IN THE SOVIET DELEGATION'S PRESENT TACTICAL POSITION IN VIENNA.

5. MBFR DOES SEEM TO BE GETTING A BETTER PRESS OF LATE IN THE SOVIET UNION. AS WE NOTED IN REFTEL, THE CENTRAL SOVIET PRESS FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FIRST TIME ANNOUNCED THE HOLDING OF A PLENARY IN VIENNA ON MARCH 25; ON APRIL 10 ANOTHER PLENARY WAS ANNOUNCED, RECEIVING EQUAL TREATMENT WITH THE SALT TWO PLENARY THE SAME DAY. THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE (PRAVDA APRIL 10) FROM THE VISIT HERE OF ICELAND FOREIGN MINISTER AUGUSTSSON, IN A PARAGRAPH ON THE DESIRABILITY OF POLITICAL DETENTE BEING SUPPLEMENTED BY MILITARY DETENTE, SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED ONLY MBFR.

6. ISVESTIYA'S REPORT (A SIGNED COMMENTARY FROM VIENNA ON APRIL 18) ON THE CONCLUDING PLENARY OF THE FIFTH ROUND ALSO MAKES MUCH THE SAME POINT ABOUT MBFR AND MILITARY DETENTE. IT CLAIMS THAT THE NEWLY-RELEASED PARTY PLENUM FOREIGN POLICY RESOLUTION, WHICH EMPHASIZES THAT POLITICAL DETENTE MUST BE STRENGTHENED THROUGH MILITARY DETENTE, "TESTIFIES TO THE SINCERITY" OF THE SOVIET POSITION IN VIENNA AND POINTS TO ITS "FIRM DESIRE" TO BRING THE TALKS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION. ISVESTIYA IS ALSO CAREFUL TO INFORM ITS READERS THAT THE DELEGATIONS "DECIDED TO RECESS IN ORDER TO INFORM THEIR GOVERNMENTS" ON THE COURSE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT SAYS THAT THE "SLOW MOVEMENT FORWARD" IS EXPLAINED BY THE COMPLEXITY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS--THOUGH ITS ALSO TAKES A SWIPE AT WESTERN INFLEXIBILITY AS A FURTHER CAUSE.

7. PRAVDA ON APRIL 18 CARRIES A TASS REPORT FROM VIENNA ON THE CONCLUDING PLENARY OF THE FIFTH ROUND WHICH HAS KHRUSHCHEV SAYING THAT THE EAST IS EMPHASIZING ITS INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO STRIVE FOR PROGRESS IN THE TALKS. THE ARMY NEWSPAPER RED STAR--IN A RARE MENTION OF MBFR--ALSO NOTED ON APRIL 17 CONCLUSION OF FIFTH ROUND.
STOESSEL

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